

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
Joint Meeting with
Tisbury Select Board
6:30PM, Wednesday, December 7, 2022
by Zoom Cloud Conference due to Covid-19 Restrictions**

1

Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, John Oliver,
Mary Ellen Larsen, Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers,
Select Bd: Chair Roy Cutrer, John Cahill,
Others: Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: Town Administrator – Jay Grande, Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder,
Administrative Secretary – Elena De Feo,
CPC – Chair Paul Munafo, Abbe Burt, Heidi Dietterich,
* TFC & TSB members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Select Board (TSB) was called to order at 6:34PM.
- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:34PM. (*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Update on Tax Rate (See documents on file.)

Property values grew ~ 35%, a significant enough change to trigger a Mass. Department of Revenue (DOR) further information request. Consequently the Town was still awaiting DOR certification. The TSB discussed two tax rate issues before next Wednesday's vote:

- shifting the rates from residential to commercial, and
- whether and how much to raise residential tax rate.

The new tax bills should go out during the winter holidays, and residents could assume at least a 10% increase as the Tisbury School debt came on the books.

- The property levy was \$31,100,000, the lion's share of Town revenue however other sources also funded the \$34,400,000 FY23 budget: excise, meals, rooms, short term rental and marihuana taxes as well as grant income.

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Budget Update (See documents on file.)

Finance Dept. health issues caused some delays. Department budgets were due this week and were then entered into Munis and reviewed by the TSB (a tight schedule that might be extended) to be ready for the FinCom in January.

- After budget discussions with Department Heads, Town Administrator Jay Grande was having and reported the following summary.

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
December 7, 2022

2

- Council on Aging (COA) Director Joyce Tucker would retire on October 23, 2023 and supplemental funds were needed for training/overlap.
- The Police Dept. was not expecting any major budget changes, after last year's new law compliance costs (see 1/26/22 Minutes p.2-4).
- Supplemental funds would be needed to cross train Town Hall staff as the new Personnel Bylaws were implemented (see 3/2/22 Minutes p.6).
- Fire Chief Greg Leland was filling in for retiring Ambulance Director Tracey Jones, and a new administrator position would have to be drafted and filled.
- The Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Facilities Manager salary should be increased to attract candidates.
- The Climate Committee requested a position, which might dovetail with the Natural Resources Dept.
- A new Building Inspector would be needed after the resignation of Ross Seavey—who would be sorely missed.
- Staff was expected to receive a sizable Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

The FinCom raised two important issues:

- Ambulance Dept. budgets had risen 350% in 15 years, mostly due to constantly expanding regulations re: 24/7 on-call, 3-member crews including the required paramedic. The FinCom advocated strongly for regionalizing the Island's ambulance services to resolve a number of costs/issues.
 - All Island towns were having trouble attracting emergency medical staff.
 - All Island ambulances answered to the Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH).
 - It would reduce both expensive equipment duplication, and administrative staff/costs.
 - Other Massachusetts rural towns covering larger territories had single, centrally located ambulance services.
- The FinCom was also strongly in favor of hiring a firm and or a staff as grant coordinator to research, apply for, and administer grants. Such positions or contracts were usually paid for by the grants they won and administered.

Update on Capital Requests (See documents on file.)

- Finance Director Jonathan Snyder highly recommended the formation of a Capital committee to:
 - insure requests were well thought out and ready to implement,
 - strategically order ranking/timing, and
 - make recommendations to the Finance Director, Town Administrator and Town Meetings.

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
December 7, 2022

3

- Tisbury was still awaiting DOR certification of Free Cash (neither free nor cash see 10/19/22 Minutes p.4) which was a major capital funding source. FY23 was expected to be in line with previous years (~ \$3,000,000). Some of this was due to very conservative budgeting, e.g. estimating FY23 short-term rental income at \$300,000 and receiving \$1,500,000 (FY24 budget projection set at \$500,000).
- As was widely publicized, Town Hall was struggling for space and the Annex modulars were starting to fall apart. Now that the School project was in progress, the Town needed to look to engineering, visioning and planning a new Town Hall. There were 2-3 suitable Town-owned properties, in particular 55 West Williams St. (currently part of the School construction site).
- the engineering, planning, permitting, construction and related costs for the Owen Park project were not yet quite fully funded,
- Ultimately the Beach Road seawall was likely to be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State grants (see 2/16/22 Minutes p.2) and so was not included in the list.
- Similarly the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHSC) project was not listed because it remained an unknown in terms of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) timeline, funding and eventual project scope.
- (The MVRHSC would submit a \$2,000,000 feasibility study FY24 warrant article to all six Towns, so Tisbury's share should be part of budget planning.)

Update on Community Preservation (CPC) and Embarkation Projects

(See documents on file.)

- The multi-year Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) application and CPC awards for the new Tisbury School playground amounting to about \$400,000 was a major CPC issue. The CPC and Town consulted with the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and the Construction Manager WT Rich, who both maintained that playground equipment and landscaping was included in the revised project \$26,000,000 funding voted at the September 20th Special Town Meeting (STM) and Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) signed on November 28th, in other words the CPC funding had been removed from the Project. The CPC rejected the FY24 Playground equipment application and advocated for freeing the encumbered funds to use for other Town projects including the School roof solar installation; suggesting the PTO could always re-apply if necessary.
- CPC Administrator Heidi Dietterich spoke to Principal John Custer and the PTO, but it was suggested the FinCom have a joint meeting with the Tisbury School Committee (TSC).

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
December 7, 2022

4

- The FinCom noted that the CPC funds which had substantial State matches were calculated to reduce taxpayer burden. So far, alternate funding, donations and grants, had been minimally successful.
- There was some confusion over whether the \$100,000 Tisbury Municipal Housing Trust request, recommended by the Affordable Housing Committee, would also fund a combined housing/Trust administrative position or if that would be in a separate article.
- There were \$366,000 worth of applications for the approximately \$266,000 embarkation revenue (50¢ charge per ferry ticket to compensate for ferry terminal impact). Recommendations were in line with past years: inner harbor dredging, traffic police, self-contained breathing apparatus, essential for fire fighting in confined ferry spaces, downtown beautification, resurfacing/painting Water St.
- Chair Nancy Gilfoy was working closely with Oak Bluffs FinCom Chair Sherry Countryman on draft legislation to raise the charge to \$1, the first increase since it was established in 2004 (see 10/13/22 Minutes). The final draft would be submitted to the Select Boards, Finance Directors and Embarkation Chair Jynell Kristal, before being sent to the State Senator and Representative to shepherd through the Legislature.
- **Member Cahill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Cutrer seconded. The vote was 2 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions: Mr. Cahill—aye, Mr. Cutrer—aye.**

Committee Reports - Tabled

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events.)

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None

Adjournment

• *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN; MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, JOHN OLIVER—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- TSB – 3:00PM, Wednesday, December 14, 2022 -Zoom
- **TFC (CPC/Embarkation) - 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 21, 2022 -Zoom**
- STM/ATM –Tuesday, April 25, 2023 – MVRHS PAC

continued >

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
December 7, 2022**

5

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy – schedule early MVC interview.

Nancy – schedule joint meeting with TSC re: School Project alternate funding.

Jay/Jon/Nancy – institute Capital Planning Committee

Jay/Jon – consider Grants Coordinator position

Jay/Jon – include MVRHS Feasibility spending in FY24 budget Planning

All – Please remember not to hit “Reply All”.

Future Agendas

- Approve Minutes from: 10/18/22, 11/16/22, 12/7/22
- Dedicate some solar revenue to sustainability projects,
- Fund Energy Stabilization Fund
- New School Maintenance Budget

Budget Season Notes

- contact Town Clerk re: resuming Article List updates;
- vote items/dept. budgets next meeting after they are presented/discussed;
- redraft FinCom letter to include deadlines and send to Committees/Boards;
- include Building Dept. fee revenues (offsetting expenses) in budget interview;
- ask departments to project all needs 5 years out i.e. like a capital plan but on other factors—staffing, program changes, etc.
- possible early votes: ° standard articles,
 ° smaller/level funded department budgets,
 ° CPC & Embarkation.
- Ask departments: general energy efficiency and emergency preparedness:
 - ° insulation, window repairs,
 - ° turn down heat/air conditioning, turn off lights, motion sensor or timers,
 - ° under sink hot water heaters.

\$100,000 FY23 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$100,000

Appendix C: Documents on File:

- Agenda/cover email (2 p.) 12/7/22
- Tisbury Community Preservation Committee, for FY2023-24 CPA Final Recommendations, November 28, 2022
- Seidman cover email re: List of embarkation projects 12/7/22
- Article Submission Form, Annual Town Meeting, Embarkation Fund Expenditures 12/6/22
- FY2024 Capital Planning (3 p.)12/7/22

continued >

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
December 7, 2022**

6

Appendix C: Documents on File:

- Gilfoy cover email re: Tax rate calculation information from Jon Snyder
11/8/22
- Calculations for Property Tax Rates FY2023 (3 p.) 12/7/22
- Tisbury School Project Groundbreaking poster, 12/10/22
- Tisbury and Oak Bluff Embarkation Fee Memorandum (2 p.)

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 1/25/23